

**RHODE ISLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**

**COVID-19  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

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This document is intended to answer commonly asked questions related to COVID-19 and is updated frequently. If you have questions about the information outlined in this document, please submit your question(s) to [doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov](mailto:doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov).

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## **COVID-19 Questions**

**Question:** *Who do I contact at the RIDOC (where can I go) if I have questions about COVID-19 (procedures, definitions, testing, quarantine/isolation, etc.)?*

**Answer:** You have 2 options to obtain this information:

1. Visit the RIDOC COVID-19 Information page on the Department's intranet at <http://doc-intranet.doc.ri.gov/COVID19/COVID19info.asp>;

**or**

2. You may submit questions to [doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov](mailto:doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov).
  - Along with your question, please be sure your name and facility are included in the email, along with an alternative contact method (i.e., phone number or secondary email address).
  - You should receive a response within 48 hours (2 business days) depending on the volume of questions.
  - If you have not received a response to your question after 2 business days, please submit your question to your supervisor and he/she will submit it to the appropriate person for a response.
  - **DO NOT** cc your supervisor when sending an email to the above address. This will help us avoid a duplication of efforts in getting a response.
  - **DO NOT email, call or text Dr. Clarke or the Health Care Services Unit staff.**

**Q:** *Who do I call if I have personal health-related questions?*

**A:** For personal health-related questions, please contact your primary care physician. **DO NOT email, call or text Dr. Clarke or the Health Care Services Unit staff.**

**Q:** *Can I have COVID-19 and not know it?*

**A:** **YES**, people can have this virus and have no symptoms/minor symptoms and not even know it; therefore, **we must all consider ourselves potentially infectious** and take care to protect those around us.

## **Testing / Re-Testing**

*For more information on the DOC testing schedule, please see the **COVID-19 Information page** on the DOC intranet (<http://doc-intranet.doc.ri.gov/COVID19/COVID19info.asp>).*

### ***Q: How does the COVID-19 test work?***

**A:** There are two types of tests that are commonly used:

- (1) Antibody testing through a blood test looks for past infections.
- (2) Virus RNA testing; These tests look specifically for the virus in the sample collected from bodily secretions from either the nasal passage or mouth.
  - In early or late infection, some people may not be shedding enough virus to show up in the test but can still transmit infection to others (this is why we encourage use of masks/social distancing and staying home if you are sick). Also, the sample may have missed the virus (sometimes called a ‘dry sample’)
  - People who are recovering and no longer shedding virus may still test positive. This is because “dead” virus can be found in the nose for many weeks after an initial infection (this is why we may see positive results long after someone has recovered from the virus).

### ***Q: What can I expect when I get tested?***

**A:** You will be checked in to confirm your name, date of birth (DOB), and contact information (it is imperative that you update this information so you can be contacted with results and or for contact tracing)

A trained medical professional will perform the test:

- You will be asked to tip your head back.
- A long (Q-tip like) swab will be inserted into one nostril then rotated.
- The culture is taken from the area between the back part of the nose and the throat (nasopharyngeal).
- The test only lasts for a few seconds.

### ***Q: What is surveillance testing and why do I need to get tested?***

**A:** Surveillance testing - or testing a population to find where there is disease - helps us find cases of COVID-19 early to prevent the spread of disease. Like nursing homes, we are a congregate-living setting; large numbers of people reside in our facilities in close quarters; therefore, finding COVID cases as quickly as possible can help us prevent widespread illness and keep us all safer.

### ***Q: Will the test hurt?***

**A:** The test can be uncomfortable but should not hurt. The more you try to relax, the smoother the test will go. Try to take a deep breath and remember not to hold your breath.

**Q: *How accurate is the test?***

**A:** The test looks for the virus. A nasopharyngeal swab is the most accurate test available to detect current infection. In early infection, some people may not be shedding enough virus to show up in the test and can result in a false-negative. This is one reason why it is important to test regularly.

**Q: *When can I expect my results?***

**A:** If you provide an accurate email address, you can easily access your results by creating an account with East Side Clinical Laboratory (ESCL). Simply log on to the East Side Clinical Laboratory (ESCL) portal (<https://escl.luminatehealth.com/>); once you have done this, you should have your results in 2-4 days. After registering, you will receive an email whenever you have new results.

If you choose to get a hard copy of your results, they will be available 2 weeks after the date of your test.

**Q: *How can I get my results?***

**A:** If your test is positive, a medical provider will contact you by phone and provide you with information on next steps.

If you provided an accurate email address, you can log on to the East Side Clinical Laboratory (ESCL) portal to get your results by going to <https://escl.luminatehealth.com/>.

You may obtain a hard copy of your results from Healthcare Services 2 weeks after the date of your test by following the instructions below:

- Copies of test results can only be obtained at the Dix Building (Healthcare Services Wing) Monday through Friday (excluding holidays) from 1:30pm to 3:30pm.
- Send an email to [doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov](mailto:doc.covidquestions@doc.ri.gov) 24 hours prior to your arrival to obtain your results.
- You must provide a photo ID for proof of identification in order to receive your results.

**Q: *What should I do if I've been instructed to attend a drive-up clinic?***

**A:** Drive up testing is booked on a case by case basis by appointment only. This testing is reserved for cases where there is a suspicion that you may have come in contact with the COVID virus- the drive-through method of testing is to keep the virus out of the facilities and to keep our testing staff safe. It is imperative that you follow the instructions below when attending this testing:

- Report to the specified building at the specified time.
- Place your ID (or paper with your name and date of birth) visible on the dash.

- A member of the HCS team will place a test kit on your vehicle and direct you where to go.
- Do not exit your car at any time.
- ***Keep your car window rolled up and MASK ON at all times until you are instructed otherwise.***

***Q: Can I opt out of testing through RIDOC? If so, am I allowed in any facilities?***

**A:** You can opt out of testing at RIDOC, but you must be tested in the community according to your building's schedule. You must provide proof of testing to your supervisor before being allowed in the facilities.

***Q: Can my supervisor order me to get tested if I opt out?***

**A:** No, but you will not be allowed to enter the facilities until you provide proof of testing. If you choose not to be tested, you will need to discharge your own time.

***Q: I missed my appointed surveillance testing day – what can I do to be tested the same week? Can I show up at another facilities clinic if available?***

**A:** Your building has an alternate testing day if you miss the primary testing day; staff are not allowed to show up at another facility for testing. If you miss both testing days, you must be tested on your own time in the community. An exception to this is if you are out of work for the entire week (vacation or other leave); you can return to work and get tested during the next scheduled testing for your building.

***Q: Do I need to have my results to enter the facilities or just have been tested previously?***

**A:** If you get tested in the community, you must show proof that you were tested during the same week as surveillance testing at your facility. Results should be forwarded to your supervisor.

***Q: Can I have a rapid test done for my routine surveillance testing?***

**A:** Yes, for routine surveillance. If you have been approved/accepted to test in the community at a site that performs rapid testing, these results will be accepted. You must provide adequate documentation of the test and results to your supervisor. Acceptable documentation must include the date and time of testing, method of testing, test result, reference range, location of test and ordering provider.

Rapid testing is not available at the RIDOC for surveillance testing

***Q: Can I have a rapid test done if I am returning from quarantine?***

**A:** No. A rapid test will not be accepted as if you are returning from quarantine.

***See also [“Return to Work”](#) section below.***

**Q: *How will I know when and where to get tested?***

**A:** Your supervisor will notify you when testing will occur. All facilities are tested every 2 weeks, generally on the same days of the week. Any changes to the testing schedule will be announced to staff. Additionally, you can view the DOC's monthly test calendar on this webpage.

**Q: *I got my surveillance test done outside of RIDOC, where do I send the results?***

**A:** Employees should send results to your supervisor.

**Q: *I (a contractor, volunteer, intern, vendor) got my surveillance test outside of RIDOC, where do I send the results?***

**A:** Your results should be sent to your supervisor. Your supervisor will forward a copy of the results to the designated DOC manager for your contract.

**Q: *I tested positive. How long should I wait to re-test?***

**A:** If you have no symptoms, you can re-test anytime; if your re-test is negative, however, you will still need to wait 10 full days before you can return to work. If your repeat test is positive after 10 days of isolation you will need a note from your medical provider stating that you are cleared to return to work in a **congregate living setting**.

## **Quarantine / Isolation**

**Q: *How is it determined when/if I need to quarantine and/or isolate?***

**A:** RIDOC *determines* quarantine, isolation and testing decisions based on RIDOH and CDC guidelines; however, the DOC is unique as it is considered a congregate living setting and has a varied nature of work that employees conduct on a daily basis, thus there are multiple factors that contribute to this decision making. RIDOC routinely consults with the RIDOH to determine the best course of action based upon these factors and the individual circumstances surrounding an exposure. *Your situation and circumstances are not the same as anyone else's; therefore, decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.*

**Q: *Who determines if I need to quarantine and/or isolate?***

**A:** Your situation and circumstances are not the same as anyone else's; therefore, determinations are made on a case-by-case basis and can involve your supervisor, the Disability Management Unit (DMU), the DOC Medical Program Director and/or the RIDOH.

**Q: *If I am quarantined and do not develop illness, who will notify me about when and where I need to get tested?***

**A:** You will need to get tested no sooner than day 12 of your quarantine. RIDOC offers drive-up testing (by appointment) or you can choose to get tested in the community.

Your supervisor will work with the Medical Program Director, or her designee, to determine when/where you should be tested. If you are out on quarantine, you should not enter the facilities to be re-tested.

**Q: *If I have been in contact with someone who tested positive, and I am quarantined, when is the earliest that I can be tested?***

**A:** If you come in contact with someone who tested positive and have been quarantined, the earliest that you can get tested is Day 12 of quarantine. If you develop symptoms during your quarantine period, notify your primary care provider immediately. S/he will advise you about testing sooner.

***Q: If I am notified that I am part of someone's contact tracing, but I have no symptoms, does that mean I am quarantined? Does that mean I have to get tested?***

**A:** If you have been in close contact with someone who is COVID positive, yes you will need to quarantine for 14 days beginning the day after the last day you were in contact with them and get tested on day 12-14.

For more information on what is considered "close contact," please see the definitions document posted to the COVID-19 Information intranet [page](http://doc-intranet.doc.ri.gov/COVID19/COVID19info.asp) (<http://doc-intranet.doc.ri.gov/COVID19/COVID19info.asp>)

***Q: Is a rapid test result acceptable so I can return to work after I have been quarantined and/or isolated?***

**A:** No, a rapid test is not acceptable when returning from quarantine and/or isolation.



## **Return to Work**

***Q: I (an employee) got tested outside of RIDOC, where do I send the results?***

**A:** Send your results to your supervisor who will forward them to the appropriate person for secure storage. Your supervisor will notify the designated quarantine list manager of your approval to return to work.

***Q: I (a contractor, volunteer, intern, vendor) got tested outside of RIDOC, where do I send the results?***

**A:** Your results should be sent to your designated RIDOC contract manager. Once received, the RIDOC contract manager will notify the designated quarantine list manager that you have supplied proof of a negative test result and are able to return to work at RIDOC. The contract manager will forward your negative test results to the appropriate person for record keeping purposes.

***Q: Who will notify me when I am clear to return to work?***

**A:** You will work with your supervisor and health care services staff to determine when you will be able to return to work.

***Q: When can I return to work after I tested positive (Isolation)?***

**A:** This decision should be made with guidance from your primary care physician and/or the medical director and will be different for different people. Generally, staff may return to work after a positive test result if:

- 10 days have passed since symptoms started or the test came back positive (whichever came first) **AND**
- At least 24 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications **AND**
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) have improved **AND**
- A repeat COVID test is negative or you have been cleared to return to work by a medical provider or 20 days have passed since you first tested positive/ had COVID symptoms

***Q: When can I return to work after I have been quarantined? Where and when can I be tested?***

**A:** Staff need to quarantine for 14 days from the last day they were with a COVID positive contact. One negative test (taken no earlier than day 12 of quarantine) is required to return to work. Tests can be taken in the community or at the RIDOC's drive-through testing (by appointment).

**Q: *Is a rapid test result acceptable so I can return to work after I have been quarantined?***

**A:** No, a rapid test is not acceptable when returning from quarantine.

*See also “[Testing/Re-Testing](#)” section above.*

## **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

*For more information on PPE, please see the COVID-19 Information [page](http://doc-intranet.doc.ri.gov/COVID19/COVID19info.asp) on the DOC intranet (<http://doc-intranet.doc.ri.gov/COVID19/COVID19info.asp>).*

***Q: Do I really need to wear my mask all day?***

**A: YES!** For your safety, and the safety of everyone around you, it is important to keep your mask on at all times. We all know how hard this can be, so if you need to “take a breather” and pull your mask down for a few minutes, make sure you are outside and not within 6 feet of anyone else, and pull it back over your nose and mouth as soon as you have gotten some fresh air. If you need to cough/sneeze, keep your mask on to contain droplets.

***Q: Does everyone have to wear a mask, even if they have a doctor’s note stating otherwise?***

**A:** All individuals entering the facilities must wear an approved mask at all times.

***Q: What type of masks are approved to be worn while at work?***

**A: All RIDOC staff** (this includes any person entering any RIDOC building) must wear either a surgical mask or K/N95 mask. Masks that are **not** acceptable include cloth face coverings, bandanas, single-layer neck gaiters or any mask with an air valve.